



Secretary of State Jason Kander  
**Election Review**  
August 7, 2013

**Polling Place Issues – St. Louis County and Dunklin County**

***Background***

After each decennial census, Missouri legislative districts are redrawn to reflect population shifts in the state. Local election officials must account for redistricting in their jurisdictions by matching each of their voters to their new districts. Redistricting changes the boundaries for legislative districts in the state, and local election authorities must be certain that voter addresses are correctly assigned to the voter's new district.

As a result of redistricting in 2011, the 2012 election cycle was the first to use newly-drawn legislative districts. In both the August Primary Election and November General Election, instances occurred in which voters received the incorrect ballot when voting at the polls. In two jurisdictions, these errors led to election irregularities and resulted in judges ordering new elections. In the 87th Legislative District race, for example, more than one hundred voters received the incorrect ballot on Election Day due, in part, to election judges not realizing that two different ballot styles were available. In the 150th Legislative District, voters' registered residences were assigned to the incorrect district, resulting in a number of voters receiving the wrong ballot. Local election authorities should document when these errors occur and conduct an internal review of their processes and training to prevent future irregularities.

***Findings***

One particular problem that may arise during the transition to new legislative districts is distributing incorrect ballot styles to the voters on Election Day. A voter's ballot style is determined by the location of his or her registered voter address within the district. This ballot style is tailored so a voter receives a ballot that lists only the candidates and ballot

issues for which he or she is eligible to vote. Each voter resides in not only a legislative district, but also in city council districts and wards, school districts, and various other local districts. Each polling place may have multiple ballot styles that reflect these different districts. As a result, when a voter enters the polling place to vote, the poll worker locates the voter in the precinct

### ***Findings (continued)***

roster, which denotes the correct ballot style to be provided to the voter. The poll worker then chooses that ballot style and distributes it to the voter.

Because of the importance of accurately matching voters to their ballot styles, it is essential for local election authorities to focus on poll worker training as a part of their Election Day preparation. Training provides poll workers with the necessary tools for determining voters' correct ballot

style and emphasizes that polling places are often the voting location for several different districts. Poll workers must pay careful attention to the address of each eligible voter as well as to the information contained in the precinct register that states which ballot each voter should receive. Similarly, it is vital that the local election authority ensure the precinct register at each polling place accurately match voters to the appropriate ballot style.